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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Palestinian Authority,
Syria/Yemen, Syria/Ukraine, Terrorism in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq,
Iran, (6/6)

1. Summary: Syrian papers today reported the visit to Damascus of Ahmad Qurei', Special Envoy of the President of the Palestinian National Authority, who conferred with President Asad and conveyed a message from President Mahmoud Abbas about the latest developments in the Palestinian arena and the ongoing inter-Palestinian dialogue. President Asad emphasized the importance of enhancing Palestinian national unity, stressing Syria's support of the Palestinian people in the face of current challenges. For his part, Qurei underscored Syria's key role in the region, hailing her supportive positions for the Palestinians and on Arab issues in general. Qurei also conferred with Vice President Shara, who repeated Syria's keenness to boost Palestinian national unity on the basis of the Palestinian people's choices and firm national principles. Shara said: "These choices are the main guarantee to achieve the Palestinian people's legitimate ambitions to return home and establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, as well as to reject all endeavors to sow seeds of discord among them." Subsequent to his talks in Damascus, Qurei made a press statement expressing the Palestinian people's high appreciation for Syria's principled, firm stances and its support on the Palestinian issue. Mr. Qurei pointed out that during the meetings he talked about the policy of isolation and segregation being practiced by the Israeli occupation authorities, Israel's policy of settlement expansion, the building of the racial segregation wall, and Israel's persistence in pursuing a unilateral solution.

Papers also reported Vice President Shara's visit to Yemen and his meetings with Yemeni Vice President Abdo Rabo Mansour Hadi and Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr Qurabi. Talks tackled the latest regional and international developments, the challenges facing the Arab nation and the importance of activating common Arab action in the interest of the Arab nation.

On Lebanon, papers reported a statement by Hasan Nasrallah, SecGen of Hizbollah, stressing the importance of establishing the

best of relations between Syria and Lebanon. In a press conference, Nasrallah rejected the discourse of escalation towards Syria launched by the so-called February 14 forces, saying that geographical and historical facts, as well as the political situation, require establishing excellent relations with Syria, which, in the first place, is in the interest of Lebanon. "All plots and campaigns targeting the Lebanese national resistance will not affect the firm will and the national commitment to the resistance, and he who thinks he can besiege resistance through discourse and behavior is mistaken," Nasrallah added.

Headlines featured a statement by "The Beirut Homeland Assembly" stressing the necessity of adhering to constant national and pan-Arab principles based on strategic relations with Syria, commitment to resistance to liberate the occupied territories and rejecting foreign interference in Lebanese internal affairs. "The Lebanese people reject foreign mandate," the Assembly statement said, stressing that "Beirut is the homeland and it is not an abandoned country for whoever dreams to cancel its role and confiscate its rights." The statement also called for keeping the identity of Beirut as an Arab capital by improving relations with brotherly Arab countries, warning against the danger of the plots being hatched against Lebanon and the region. A member of the Political Bureau of the Syrian Social National Party, Hafez al-Saygh, stressed the necessity of establishing distinguished relations with Syria. He called on the Lebanese people to commit to national resistance to face the continued Israeli aggressions on Lebanon. For his part, Zaher al-Khatib, Secretary General of the Lebanese Federation of Workers, expressed commitment to the national resistance to confront the American-Zionist scheme.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad receives a message from Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, on latest developments in the Palestinian arena. President Asad reviews with Qurei, Envoy of the Palestinian President, mutual cooperation and means of boosting Palestinian national unity. Qurei: We appreciate Syria's firm support of Palestinians and all Arab causes" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/6)

"Vice President Shara reviews latest regional and international developments and activation of common Arab action with Yemeni Vice President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/6)

"Hasan Nasrallah, SecGen of Hizbollah, confirms spontaneity of popular anger about LBC TV Program that mocked him in person, holds LBC responsible for popular unrest, and responds to the February 14 powers: It is in the interest of Lebanon to establish excellent relations with Syria.... Nothing will weaken the resistance" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/6)

"First Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Stanislav Stashevsky arrives in Damascus on an official visit to Syria to co-chair the 4th Session of the Syrian-Ukrainian Committee for Economic Cooperation. Stashevsky stresses importance of existing relations with Syria, particularly the volume of trade, that totaled USD 700 million last year" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/6)

"Mass demonstrations in Baghdad and Basra call for ending occupation of Iraq. Khalilzad [US Ambassador to Iraq]: Our mistakes are multiple, our choices are limited" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/6)

"Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, visits Tehran to deliver nuclear suggestions. Asefi [Spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry]: The Boushahr nuclear station poses no threat" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/6)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Syria's Sleepless Eyes"

Muhammad Khair al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (6/6): "Syria is coming under pressure and threats from rancorous forces because of its honorable national and pan-Arab positions.... The aim is to force Syria to abandon these positions and consequently facilitate the implementation of the hostile plans against the Arab region...."

"When foreign conspiracies fail to break Syria's will and firm rejection of the plans that seek to violate Arab territory and confiscate the Arabs' freedom and legitimate ambitions to liberate their occupied lands and ensure their independence and stability, these forces work to destabilize Syria through the use of deviant and misguided people whose hatred has blinded them to the right path and who, consequently, agreed to serve as cheap tools in the hands of these forces, practicing terrorism upon foreign orders, since terrorism is the shortest way and the easiest and most malicious method to harm Syria's stability and its rejection of the policies of occupation, hegemony, and blackmail...."

"The acts of terror that take place in Syria from time to time embody the ugliest forms of this plotting, which is planned abroad and implemented by agent puppets supported by vengeful forces in the neighborhood.... These terrorist acts coincide with the intensifying crisis of the forces of the neocolonialist scheme that seek to tighten Zionist-American control on the region...."

"This shows that the forces that stand behind these terrorist acts are the forces that are facing the crisis that is foiling their Middle East Scheme, from Iraq to Palestine to Lebanon to Sudan, and with them, naturally, the forces that collude with them in the region."

"Syria, through its national cohesion, will foil these plans and maintain its stability and security...."

"Well-Trained and Disciplined!"

Mohamed Zein, an editorialist in government-owned Syria Times, commented (6/6): "Recent massacres committed in cold blood by US occupation troops against Iraqi civilians in Haditha and Ishaqi and earlier in al-Qaem, Samurra, Falluja and Mosel are additional crimes perpetrated in the war-torn Arab country."

"Some US officials 'deplored' the deliberate killing of children and women as a 'technical mistake,' while others say the US troops are 'well-trained and disciplined' and carry out their national duty with dignity in defense of freedom and democracy."

"The outrageous officials also said that while the 'professional' troops were tailing 'terrorists,' they came across some civilians and had no choice except to follow the 'mission' and kill those civilians, lest they should be converted later into 'terrorists.' Such a mistake should not overwhelm great endeavors made by US marines who came to defend America's honor in Iraq, they added."

"Some other US officials, who acquitted the killers, confirmed that there are no 'clean wars' and promised that the troops need some new culture in adopting legal and moralistic principles in battlefields."

"Past and recent experiences show that US wars launched against various nations have never been clean, but dirty and totally unjustifiable. Throughout those wars, the US army has certainly had ample training, discipline and professionalism. But aren't these experiences, manifested through killing, destruction, torture, oppression and human right violations, in sum, the

professionalism of the invading US armies? With very few exceptions, such doctrines and practices are undoubtedly what the army has always been told to carry out during its 'missions.'

"People are fed up with US occupation, aggression, intervention and threats that have claimed thousands of innocent lives, and they no longer tolerate Washington's lies about freedom, democracy and protection of human rights.

"The time is now right for US decision-makers, more than ever before, to stop the flagrant policy and to give up tyranny and arrogance before the US image is further distorted and US credibility is further undermined by the ruling neo-conservative junta.

"In the interests of Americans and nations across the world, will things be put on the right course before it is too late?"

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